Autocracy had been condemned by all civilised governments and people were given a substantial share in the administration of their country in almost every State. It would be admitted on all hands that the work of the Head of the Administration was so onerous and heavy that one man could not successfully cope with it however clever he might be. Council government was now recognised as the right form of Government everywhere, and the Member pointed that there was proof in the Puranas to show that a Council of Ministers existed in each State even in ancient times to advise the King in all important matters. The Member next referred to the undesirability of appointing foreigners as Dewans and Heads of Departments in the State, as such appointments were not conducive to the well-being of the people. There was no continuity or fixity of policy in certain important matters affecting the administration, with the result that public money was often wasted in useless ventures. There were also instances where such administrations had not given satisfaction to the people, as for instance, in the enhancement of process and registration fees, etc., creation of unnecessary appointments, etc. The Member was not for appointing officers as members of the Executive Council, as that meant only substituting a number of bureaucrats for the present autocrat. He wanted members of the Council to be elected by the people who would directly be responsible to the people. The Member therefore prayed for the early creation of an Executive Council composed of four Members, excluding the Dewan, of whom one should be in charge of the Financial portfolio, another in charge of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, a third in charge of Education and the fourth in charge of Public Works, Sanitation, Anchal, etc., the remaining portfolios resting with the Dewan. The members should be elected by either the Legislative Council or the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and they should be answerable to these institutions. The Members should have higher powers than the Ministers under the British Indian Government.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

132. Suggestions for closer participation by the people in the administration of the country.

Mr. M. L. Janardanan Pillai (Member, Trading Classes, Alleppey) first thanked the Government for actively interfering and obtaining certain rights and privileges on behalf of Travancore in the Cochin Port Trust which had been rather neglected by the previous administration. Proceeding to his subject, he said that he proposed to speak on the expansion of national institutions in the State. Taking the S. M. P. Assembly first, the Member observed that the institution was started 17 years ago by that far-sighted statesman, Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, C. I. E., and that although at the beginning the programme of subjects did not contain any general subjects, as for a long time past the people had no public occasion to give vent to their grievances and hence discussed only local subjects affecting their immediate wants. That aspect had now changed and several members took up general subjects at recent sessions, but in recent years Government were not giving satisfactory replies to their representations, but simply gave them an assurance that the subject was noted. The Member referred to certain instances wherein the representations of the people's representatives were unsatisfactorily dealt with. The treatment accorded to the members of the Assembly was also not satisfactory, and as a consequence some of the best men kept away from the Assembly. Though substantial good had come to the country by the institution of the Assembly, the fact still remained that the valuable time of the Government and also of the members of the Assembly was oftentimes wasted owing to the cumbrous and circumlocutory method of conducting the Assembly.

The Member was glad that the Dewan had forestalled him and several other Members by dealing with many of their subjects in his opening Address, leaving very little for them to dwell upon. The Member was of opinion that he political consciousness of the people had been awakened and that the political institutions should therefore be revised and remodelled in conformity with the new wave of political thought and on democratic lines. Successive Dewans had testified to the good sense and moderation and the high sense of public duty

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

of the members, which fact would go to show that they were fit for more privileges at the hands of Government. The Member next complained that Government, particularly as represented by the subordinate services, were not responsible to the people, and submitted that they should be made to feel their responsibility to the people. As far as the higher ranks of the public service were concerned, it looked as if they could afford to ignore public opinion, and there was no effective method of making the Travancore official feel that he had a very serious responsibility to satisfy legitimate non-official opinion in all his actions. The Member pointed out that the constitution of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly decided 17 years ago needed revision and he advocated the reconstitution of the Assembly on the following lines:—

(1) Wider enfranchisement as recognised in all countries should be allowed. The present list of voters was unsatisfactory.

(2) The present method of dealing with all subjects in one session of the Assembly was unduly long and tiresome. There ought to be two convenient sessions in the year, one at the end of Kanni or beginning of Thulam and the other some time in Medam. One continued session lasting for 10 or 12 days was disadvantageous to the Members, especially business men who had to keep away from their business continuously for 10 and 12 days.

(3) The Members should be asked to send a succinct precis of their subjects a month or two previous to the session so as to enable Government to give definite replies at the time of representation.

(4) The Assembly should be made a deliberative body where subjects of importance could be discussed in close quarters.

(5) Enhanced batta and mileage should be given to the Members. They should be provided with decent accommodation at Trivandrum and they should be treated as State guests during the period of their stay in connection with the Assembly.

The Member appreciated the intention of Government to create two sets of local bodies. He suggested that Village Associations and District Associations should form two connecting links between the people and the Government. The village should be the smallest unit and the District body should be capable of dealing with larger problems affecting the District as a whole. When these two bodies had dealt with all the smaller subjects, larger subjects covering a larger sphere than the villages and the District should be taken up by the Popular Assembly, many of them coming in as recommendations from these two bodies.

Coming to the Legislative Council, the Member stated that he did not propose to deal with the subject at length and that he had to devel[illegible] only one or two points. His suggestions were:—

(1) The lists of voters were unsatisfactorily maintained. The Revenue officers concerned should be directed to devote their personal attention to the subject.

(2) The number of members to represent a Division should be increased as the one member now allowed for a Division was inadequate.

(3) Commercial interests should be better represented in the Council. At present there was in the Council only one member to represent commercial interests and his activities were naturally confined to one particular area. There should be at least one member representing the commercial interests of each Division.

The Member next urged the creation of an Executive Council which should be representative in character.

Finally, the Member prayed that both in regard to the Assembly and the Legislative Council, non-official opinion should be taken by Government before they formed their views definitely and that the people should be taken more and more into the confidence of the Government.

The Assembly adjourned at 4-50 P. M.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly